CANADA

House of Commons Debates

Wednesday, September 21, 1988

HEALTH

ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY DISEASE

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, thousands of Canadians suffer health problems because of a distinct sensitivity to food additives, chemicals, and other synthetic substances. Only recently has this been recognized as a physical illness. For example, last year the Ontario Medical Association called on Governments to increase research on causes, effects and treatment of environmental sensitivity, also called the 20th century disease.

Individuals, organizations, and even the Human Rights Commissioner have asked the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) to take action on this serious health problem. Instead of action he has only sympathy. We urge him to recognize the existence of this illness, to instruct his Department to become competent in the field, to launch a campaign to educate health professionals, and to consult with those who suffer from environmental sensitivity. In short, we urge him to stop sympathizing and start acting.

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Friday, August 26, 1988

HEALTH

ENVIRONMENTAL HYPERSENSITIVITY AILMENT

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I have one question to direct to whomever is speaking for health and welfare today. I did give notice to the Minister's office so I hope for a positive response. My question concerns environmental hypersensitivity, which is a multi-system disorder usually affecting the nervous systems of persons who are sensitive to some foods and chemicals and environmental agents.

On August 3 the Human Rights Commission wrote to the Minister expressing the hope he would express publicly his sympathy for the plight of persons such as Chris Brown who suffer from this very serious ailment. What action has the Minister taken? And will the Department of National Health and Welfare undertake a public awareness campaign, as well as research, to assist in avoiding and treating this serious and little known ailment?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the Hon. Member for giving notice of her question. I am informed that my colleague, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, is monitoring the situation and will report back to the Hon. Member upon his return.